

Message Text

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R 032012Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO AMEMBASSY MADRID

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 7649

AMEMBASSY LISBON

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 35900

E.O. 11652: XGDS - 4

TAGS: SP, FR, PFOR, PINT

SUBJECT: FRENCH SOCIALIST PARTY (PS) VIEWS ON UPCOMING
PSOE CONGRESS

SUMMARY: PS DELEGATEFOR IBERIAN AFFAIRS OFFERED AN
ESSENTIALLY NEGATIVE VIEW OF CURRENT POSSIBILITIES OPEN
TO PSOE. NOTING THAT PSOE STRENGTH WAS DECLINING -- HE
SAYS THAT POLLS NOW GIVE GONZALEZ' PARTY ONLY 20 OF THE
VOTE -- AND THAT THE PARTY IS SPLINTERING (AT BEST, HE
CLAIMS, GONZALEZ ONLY CONTROLS 75 OF THE PARTY'S MAN-
DATES), ANTOINE BLANCA ARGUED THAT PSOE "ACTIVE ABSTEN-
TION" FROM THE UPCOMING REFERENDUM, PSOE ATTITUDES TOWARD
THE LEGALIZATION OF THE PCE, AND THE POSSIBILITY OF PSOE
ABSTENTION FROM FUTURE LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS WERE WEAPONS
AVAILABLE TO SPANISH SOCIALISTS IN DEALING WITH OBSTACLES
TO REFORM. EVEN SO BLANCA EXPECTS PSOE MAY BE TEMPTED BY
CENTRIST SOLUTION. END SUMMARY

1. THE REFERENDUM: BLANCA SAYS THAT ALL OF HIS CONVER-
SATIONS WITH GONZALEZ HAVE BEEN BASED ON THE ASSUMPTION
THAT THE PSOE WILL BOYCOTT, "IN THE MOST ACTIVE WAY
POSSIBLE AT THE TIME," THE FUTURE REFERENDUM ON LEGISLA-
TIVE REFORM. GONZALEZ' REASONS FOR THIS DECISION INCLUDE
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- PARTICIPATION IN THE REFERENDUM WOULD LAY THE PSOE OPEN TO CRITICISM FROM THE COMMUNISTS, WHO HAVE ALREADY DISAPPROVED THE ENTIRE IDEA;
- PARTICIPATION IN THE REFERENDUM WOULD GIVE AN AUTOMATIC APPROVAL TO GOS PLANNING FOR LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS AND THAT IS SOMETHING GONZALEZ IS NOT PREPARED TO DO UNTIL HE IS SURE THAT THE PARTIES OF THE LEFT WILL HAVE "PROPER AND EQUITABLE" ACCESS TO THE MASS MEDIA;
- PARTICIPATION WOULD ALSO BE AN ADMISSION THAT THE REFERENDUM IS LEGAL AND JUST MECHANISM.

HOWEVER, BLANCA NOTED, THE LLOPIS FACTION OF THE PSOE -- WHICH HE FELT MIGHT GO AS FAR AS A FORMAL SPLIT WITH THE PSOE -- WILL PROBABLY URGE ITS FOLLOWERS TO VOTE "YES" ON THE REFERENDUM.

2. PCE LEGALIZATION: BLANCA BELIEVES THAT THE PSOE WOULD NOT REPEAT NOT REFUSE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ELECTIONS IF THE GOS REFUSES TO LEGALIZE THE PCE, BUT IT COST HIM SOMETHING TO SAY THAT. WHILE BLANCA BELIEVES THAT THE PCE SHOULD BE LEGALIZED IF ONLY TO AVOID GIVING IT THE POSSIBILITY OF CRITICIZING WHILE AVOIDING ALL RESPONSIBILITY AND WHILE HE BELIEVES THAT GONZALEZ' THINKING IS IN THE SAME DIRECTION, IT IS CLEAR THAT NEITHER MAN APPROACHES THE QUESTION OF LEGALIZING A STALINIST PARTY WITH ANYTHING RESEMBLING EQUANIMITY. BUT EQUALLY IMPORTANT IS BLANCA'S PERCEPTION THAT GONZALEZ BELIEVES THAT IN THE LONG RUN THERE IS NO

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"DEMOCRATICALLY VIABLE ALTERNATIVE TO LEGALIZATION."

3. LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS: PSOE PARTICIPATION IN THE
LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS IS SURE, SAID BLANCA, UNLESS THE
SPANISH SOCIALISTS ARE DENIED ADEQUATE ACCESS TO THE
MEDIA. IT IS ONLY UNDER THIS LATTER CONDITION THAT THE
PSOE WOULD REFUSE INSCRIPTION IN THE ELECTIONS. ASKED
FOR HIS ASSESSMENT OF THAT POSSIBILITY, BLANCA NOTED
THAT PCE RECOGNITION WOULD PROBABLY BE A FACTOR IN ALLOW-
ING OPPOSITION ACCESS TO THE MEDIA -- IF THE
GOS DOES LEGALIZE THE PCE IT IS UNLIKELY TO DO MUCH MORE
THAN GIVE IT TOKEN ACCESS. THE PSOE WOULD THEREFORE
SUFFER FROM THE SAME KIND OF RESTRICTIONS AS THE PCE.
EVEN IF THE PCE IS NOT LEGALIZED, BLANCA NOTED, THERE IS
"SUCH A THING AS INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC OPINION WHICH
COULD FORCE THE GOS INTO GIVING ALL OF THE PARTIES EQUAL
ACCESS TO THE MEDIA." PRESSING THE POINT FURTHER, BLANCA
SAID THAT IN ALL OF HIS PRESS STATEMENTS RECENTLY,
GONZALEZ HAD BEEN CALLING ON THE DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENTS
OF THE WORLD TO PUT PRESSURE ON THE GOS TO ENSURE SUCH
ACCESS; THE PS; HE SAID, OBVIOUSLY SUPPORTS THIS
IDEA.

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4. ELECTION PREDICTIONS: BLANCA BELIEVES THAT THE PSOE,
GIVEN GOOD ACCESS TO THE MEDIA, COULD ROLL UP A 20 SCORE
IN LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS. THE PCE, WERE IT LEGALIZED,
WOULD PROBABLY DO NO BETTER THAN 10. THIS LEADS, BLANCA
NOTED WRYLY, TO A SITUATION IN WHICH THE PSOE MAY BE
FACED WITH THE SAME "CENTRIST, THIRD-ROAD TEMPTATION"
THROUGH WHICH THE FRENCH SOCIALIST PARTY HAD COME BE-
TWEEN 1922 AND 1972; SMILING SLIGHTLY, BLANCA SAID HE
THOUGHT THAT A NEW USG ADMINISTRATION WOULD FIND THAT
THOUGHT REASSURING.

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